

DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION

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**AGENDA ITEM #7**

November 5, 1999

To: Delta Protection Commission

From: Margit Aramburu, Executive Director

Subject: Acquisition of Land in the Primary Zone Since January 1, 1993 by Public Agencies and Nonprofit Groups; Update from May, 1999.
(For Commission Information Only)

Background:

At the March, 1999 meeting, Chairman McCarty asked staff to update the Commission on public agency and non-profit group ownership of land in the Primary Zone of the Delta. Staff research indicates that of the 487,625 acres of land and water in the Primary Zone, in January 1993 approximately **33,725 acres** (*33,500 acres*) were in public agency ownership. Nonprofit agency ownership was limited to the Nature Conservancy-owned the Jepson Prairie Preserve totaling 1,600 acres.

New information is in bold type, old information is in italics.

Since January 1, 1993, fee title land acquisitions total **21,521 acres** (*17,850.5 acres*). The total now in public and nonprofit ownership in the Primary Zone is **55,992 acres** (*52,950 acres*), or approximately **11.5%** (*11%*) of the Primary Zone.

The conservation easements described below total 3,495 acres.

Land Ownership as of January 1, 1993.

The Background Report on Land Use and Development, dated January 1994, describes land ownership in the Delta as of January 1, 1993 (see attached excerpt). Of the total 487,625 acres of land and water in the Primary Zone of the Delta, Ports owned 4,124 acres; special districts owned about 3,000; cities and counties owned over 1,567 acres; East Bay Regional Park District owned or managed about 600 acres; the Department of Parks and Recreation owned 4,857 acres of land

and water-covered area; the Department of Fish and Game owned over 8,000 acres of land and water-covered area; Department of Water Resources owned 8,545 acres; CalTrans owned 480 acres of land in addition to rights-of-way; the Corps of Engineers owned 250 acres on the tip of Grand Island; and the Navy owned about 2,000 acres used for communications facilities.

Not included in that list were 109 acres owned by the Bureau of Reclamation at the Delta Cross Channel. The Department of Water Resources also owned 193 acres at the southern tip of Liberty Farms, adjacent to Cache Slough. In addition, the State Lands Commission administers the State's sovereign ownership interests in tidelands, submerged land and bends of navigable waters--approximately 50,000 acres in the Primary Zone are water-covered.

Ports	4,124 acres
Special Districts	3,000 acres
Cities and Counties	1,567 acres
East Bay Regional Park District	600 acres
Department of Parks and Recreation	4,857 acres
Department of Fish and Game	8,000 acres
Department of Water Resources	8,738 acres
CalTrans	480 acres
Corps of Engineers	250 acres
Navy	2,000 acres
Bureau of Reclamation	109 acres

Fee Title Acquisitions Since January 1, 1993:

SPECIAL DISTRICTS:

East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD): EBRPD serves Alameda and Contra Costa Counties and is funded through property taxes. EBRPD has acquired the eastern half of Big Break in Contra Costa County and has an option on the western half.

Big Break (Eastern Half), Contra Costa County

980 acres (1995)

Ironhouse Sanitary District (ISD): ISD owned about 2,600 acres on Jersey Island and an additional 300 acres in the Secondary Zone. ISD has since purchased most of the remainder of Jersey Island, which totals 3,470 acres.

Jersey Island, Contra Costa County	800 acres
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STATE:

Department of Fish and Game: Department of Fish and Game in partnership with the Yolo Basin Foundation, purchased 3,583 acres of agricultural land in the Yolo Bypass, just south of the I-80 causeway, for restoration to seasonal wetland habitat. The area has been planted and enhanced and is managed by the State and the Yolo Basin Foundation for habitat, access, and recreation (wildlife observation and hunting).

Yolo Bypass, Yolo County	3,583 acres
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Department of Water Resources: Department of Water Resources (DWR) has been acquiring property on Sherman Island in the South Delta, and in the Hood area of Sacramento County. In 1993, DWR owned 1,037 acres on Sherman Island and 2,965 acres on Twitchell Island. DWR now owns the following:

Sherman Island, Sacramento County	8,146 acres
(Total of 9,183 acres)	
Hood, Sacramento County	
Agricultural lands	123 acres (1995)
[NOTE: Cold storage facility on 6.5 acres in Hood was not purchased in 1999]	

Department of Parks and Recreation: In September, the Department acquired 263 acres of mostly water-covered lands east of its property east of Locke and west of McCormack Williamson Tract. The lands are in Sacramento County in an area commonly called "Delta Meadows".

Delta Meadows, Sacramento County	263 acres (1999)
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FEDERAL:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: The Fish and Wildlife Service has been acquiring property within the boundary of the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in Sacramento County. The master plan for the refuge envisioned approximately 9,000 acres in public ownership north of Lambert Road, and an additional 9,000 acres of land in private ownership under management agreements between Lambert Road and Lost Slough (south of Twin Cities Road). Acquisitions to date include:

Lodi Gun Club, Sacramento County	287 acres (1994)
Agri-Versified, Sacramento County	227 acres (1997)
Lewis Ranch, Sacramento County	50 acres (1998)

Fish and Wildlife Service received a grant from CALFED to acquire Liberty Island in the Yolo Bypass in Yolo and Solano Counties. The Trust for Public Lands acquired the land; transfer of ownership must await certification of the environmental document currently under preparation.

Army Corps of Engineers: The Corps has been directed by Congress to acquire Little Holland Tract (1,640 acres) in Yolo and Solano Counties; negotiations have been underway for several years.

Bureau of Reclamation: The Bureau purchased the northeastern portion of Prospect Island, covering 1,228 acres in 1995. Most of the rest of the island is owned by the Port of Sacramento (1,240 acres), with a 37 acre area at the southeast tip owned by Department of Fish and Game. The Army Corps of Engineers and Department of Water Resources are jointly proposing to restore the Bureau's lands to tidal, aquatic habitat.

Prospect Island, Solano County	1,228 acres (1995)
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NON-PROFIT:

Solano County Farmlands and Open Space Foundation: The Jepsen Prairie Preserve was transferred from the Nature Conservancy to the Solano County Farmlands and Open Space Foundation in 1997.

Jepsen Prairie Preserve, Solano County	1,566 Acres (1997)
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Cosumnes Preserve: The Nature Conservancy has applied for and received funds from CALFED for acquisition of McCormack-Williamson Tract, Sacramento County. Transfer of property was completed in September.

McCormack-Williamson Tract, Sacramento County	1,654 acres (1999)
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Liberty Island: The Trust for Public Lands has acquired 4,760 acre Liberty Island in anticipation of transfer of the property to the Fish and Wildlife Service. The property is in both Solano and Yolo Counties within the Yolo Bypass. Transfer of ownership to the Service must await certification of environmental document currently under preparation.

Liberty Island, Solano and Yolo Counties

1,760 acres (1999)

Conservation Easements:

Several entities/agencies have purchased easements over privately owned property with the intent of protecting habitat on those lands. Easements have been acquired on several duck clubs in the Yolo Bypass, on mitigation sites, and on agricultural land with the intent of converting the land to seasonal habitat. The total acreage in the listed conservation easements is 3,495 acres. Delta Protection Commission records do not indicate date of acquisition of all of the easements:

Empire Tract, San Joaquin County: Wildlife Conservation Board acquired a conservation easement on a 261 acre parcel (1995) to retire agriculture and create seasonal wetland habitat.

Tyler Island, Sacramento County: Wildlife Conservation Board and Natural Resources Conservation Service purchased easements on an 800-acre parcel with intent of creating seasonal wetland habitat (1998).

Saxon Duck Club: In the Yolo Bypass, a conservation easement on 480 acres of managed wetland.

Yolo Bypass-Skyraker Duck Club: In the Yolo Bypass, a conservation easement on 340 acres of managed wetland.

Duck Club: In the Yolo Bypass, a conservation easement on 158 acres of managed wetland.

Terminus Tract: In San Joaquin County, a conservation easement on 30 acres adjoining Sycamore Slough.

Medford Island: In San Joaquin County, several conservation easements totalling about 300 acres on Medford Island, a privately-owned mitigation bank.

Wright Elmwood Tract: Adjacent to San Joaquin River, a conservation easement over 50 acres of habitat.

Palm Tract: On the eastern half of Palm Tract, in Contra Costa County, a conservation easement covering 1,076 acres of agriculture-seasonal and permanent wetland, created as mitigation for impacts associated with construction of the WAPA power lines through the Delta.